

Editor, *Duxbury Clipper*:

I would like to comment on Jerry Dewing's letter to the editor 2 weeks ago. Although golf courses may encourage some types of wildlife, such as Canada Geese, rarer, more reclusive species such as wood ducks and grey foxes will be adversely affected by a habitat change.

Some of the pesticides that have been applied to the current 9-hole course are listed as "persistent." Among the many adverse side affects of these chemicals is the inhibition of egg production by both amphibians and birds. Some of these chemicals even encourage the growth of certain insect populations and pathogens. Basically, we are upsetting a delicate and not well understood balance of nature by radically changing the environment.

A scientific study (Klein, 1989) of 11 golf courses in Maryland demonstrated a severe decline in number and diversity of wildlife species associated with waterways and wetlands draining these golf courses. A golf course has a similar effect on the natural environment that a residential development of 1/2 acre lots would have, according to this report. The literature includes numerous references to poisoning of waterfowl, raptors, and other birds due to pesticide applied to turf grass. It is therefore strongly suggested that sites for golf courses avoid areas where these many species of birds congregate. This 80+ acres of proposed expansion constitutes a type of closed canopy forest that is increasingly rare to New England and which provides an essential habitat to migratory song birds, birds of prey and waterfowl.

The proposed expansion includes plans for the filling of the numerous kettle holes that mark the topography of this unique, glacier-marked land. These depressions serve as vernal ponds—temporary ponds that come miraculously to life with frogs, toads and salamanders in the spring as they fill as the water table rises. These pools are essential to the continuation of many species of amphibians which are already threatened by habitat loss, acid rain and the chemical pollution of their environment.

Dr. Michael Klemens, director of program development at the Wildlife Conservation Society, studied Duxbury's population of endangered box turtles on this very piece of land in preparation for his book on amphibians and reptiles. He writes, regarding the proposed expansion that "local municipalities are the first line of defence of global biodiversity." Throughout this town, this state, this country and ultimately the world, species of wildlife are becoming "fragmented," isolated on increasingly smaller and more distant islands of relatively undisturbed land. Transforming a sizeable chunk of biologically rich land is not a trivial decision and will have consequences that are far more widespread than most of us realize. The proposed expansion would, without question, certainly diminish the natural beauty of this very beautiful and unique town.

Dr. Jennifer Maas  
Franklin St.